

Testes cells may be key to new cure

We raised last time the specter of one of the more bizarre biological experiments that I have heard about in some time. Can we use testes cells to treat Parkinson's patients?

Parkinson's, of course, is a degeneration of the brain's ability to control body movements. It affects somewhere between 500,000 and 1,500,000 Americans, and likely has multiple causes. Certain genes and personality traits have been indicated as having at least some slight but significant association with the disease, but these account at best for only a small minority of cases. "Toxic chemicals" are thought to have major influence, but details are very sketchy. The disease is known to be associated with a degeneration of nerve cells (neurons) in specific areas of the brain, and most patients subsequently show a greatly reduced production of dopamine, a normal and necessary brain chemical.

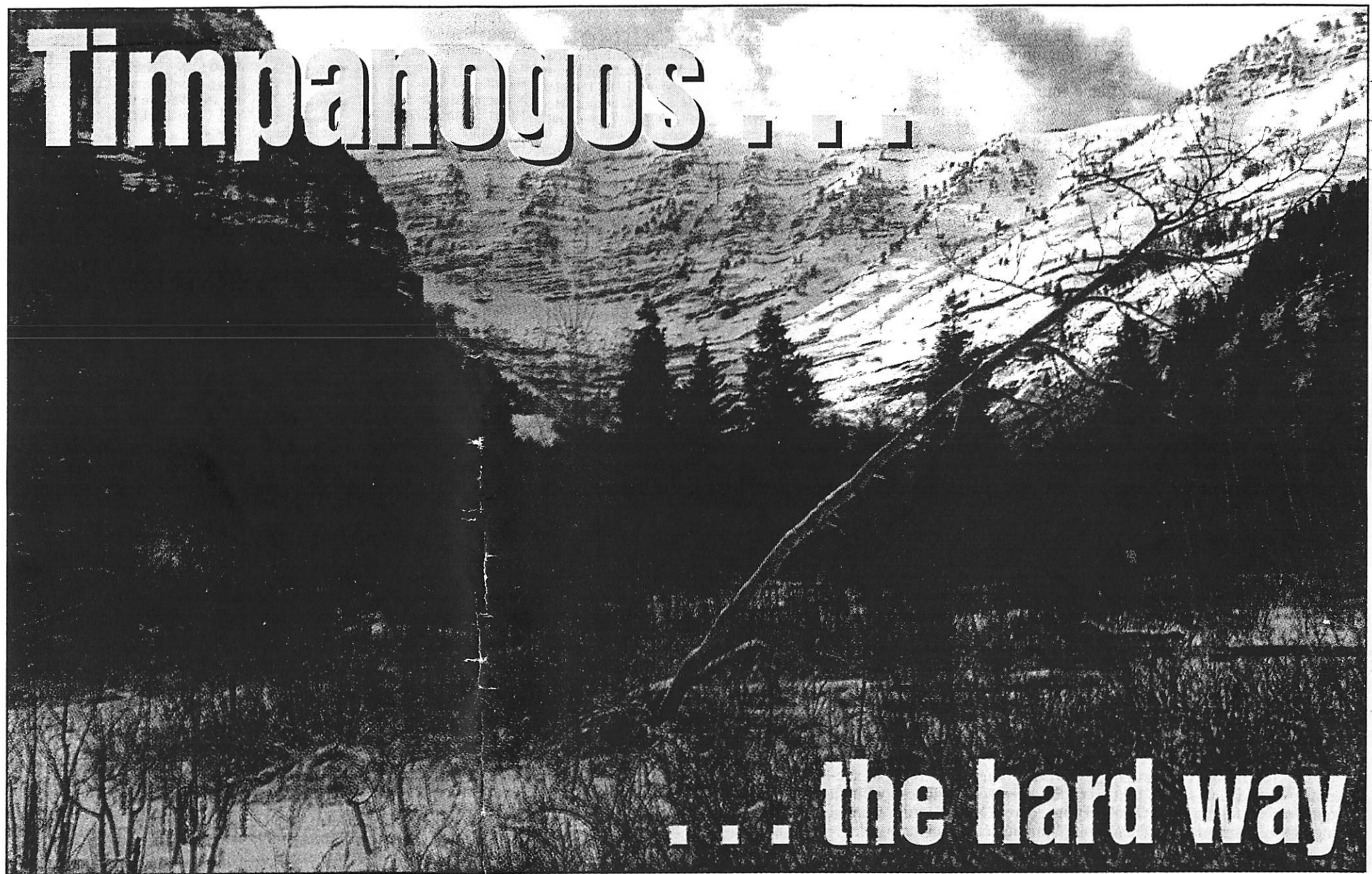
A variety of treatments have been



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tried over the decades, from burning out tiny areas of the brain, to a variety of drugs (L-DOPA is one frequently used, but its effect in elevating dopamine seems to lessen over time), to transplanting a variety of



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Account of 1916 climb gives details of 2 men

